

Willford I. King papers, 1912-1962

Overview of the Collection

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| Creator | King, Willford Isbell, 1880-1962 |
| Title | Willford I. King papers |
| Dates | 1912-1962 (inclusive) 1912 1962 |
| Quantity | 136.5 linear feet, (91 containers, 1 folder) |
| Collection Number | Coll 089 |
| Summary | Willford Isbell King (1880-1962) was a professor of political economy, statistician with United States Public Health Service, and economist for the National Bureau of Economic Research. The collection contains correspondence, printed material written by King and others, organizational records for the Committee for Constitutional Government, and three book-length works. |
| Repository | University of Oregon Libraries, Special Collections and University Archives. UO Libraries--SCUA 1299 University of Oregon Eugene OR 97403-1299 Telephone: 541-346-3068 spcarref@uoregon.edu |
| Access Restrictions | Collection is open to the public. Collection must be used in Special Collections and University Archives Reading Room. Collection or parts of collection may be stored offsite. Please contact Special Collections and University Archives in advance of your visit to allow for transportation time. |
| Additional Reference Guides | See the Collective Name Index to the Research Collection of Conservative and Libertarian Studies for a cross-referenced index to names of correspondents in this collection, if any, and 37 related University of Oregon collections, including dates of correspondence. See index instructions on use. See the Current Collection Guide for detailed description and requesting options. |
| Languages | English |
| Sponsor | Funding for encoding this finding aid was provided through a grant awarded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. |

Historical Note

Willford Isbell King, a noted statistician, economist, and one-time chairmen of the Committee for Constitutional Government, Inc., was born in Cascade, Iowa in 1880. The son of a lawyer, King moved with his parents in April 1888, to the North Platte Valley area of Nebraska. There, Dr. King received his primary and secondary education from the local schoolhouse teachers. He enrolled at the University

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of Nebraska and graduated in 1905. Eventually he moved to Wisconsin to attend the University of Wisconsin where he received the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in 1913.

While working on his Ph.D., Dr. King began teaching courses on political economy. In 1917, he left for Washington, D.C. to assume a position of statistician with the United States Public Health Service. Dr. King left this position in 1920 to become the economist for the National Bureau of Economic Research, in Washington, D.C. In 1927, King moved to New York City to accept a professorship of economics at New York University; he remained there until 1945.

During the Depression years, Dr. King opposed the New Deal. Instead, he advocated a sliding scale of wages based on production, no government intervention in business, currency expansion, the reduction of taxes in upper brackets, and the abolition of all levies on incomes of corporations and from invested capital. In 1933, King founded the Committee on Economic Accord, which later produced *The Handbook of Accepted Economics*. By 1945, Dr. King had retired from his position at the University to become chairman of the Committee for Constitutional Government, Inc. King served as chairman, and later as advisor to the Committee, which sought to "uphold Constitutional principles and our system of free enterprise."

Willford King lived with his wife, Jane Elizabeth Patterson, and their three children, Harold J., Hugh P., and Floria Jane, in Douglaston, New York. Both of King's sons entered the fields of economics and statistics. Dr. Willford I. King died at his home on October 17, 1962, at the age of 82.

Content Description

The Willford I. King Papers contain correspondence, printed material written by King and others, organizational records for the Committee for Constitutional Government, and three book-length works.

The majority of the papers consist of chronologically arranged correspondence. There are approximately 20,000 letters, spanning the years 1917 to 1962. The largest segment within this series occurs between 1943 and 1959, which includes the correspondence concerning the Committee for Constitutional Government and its members. A substantial amount of the Committee correspondence involves Dr. Edward A. Rumely, who, along with King, was a charter member. Other major correspondents include Robert Dresser, a lawyer from Providence, Rhode Island; Sumner Gerard, Treasurer for the Committee; Daniel Luten, an architect from Indiana; Guy Irving Birch and Robert C. Cook, of the Population Reference Bureau; Bart Saunders, a New York City businessman; and Samuel Pettengill, a congressman and writer from Indiana. Notable politicians who corresponded with Dr. King include Presidents Herbert Hoover and Dwight D. Eisenhower, then-Vice President Richard M. Nixon, and then-Senators Lyndon Johnson and John F. Kennedy. Of particular note is a letter, February 23, 1950, from General Douglas MacArthur discussing the role of the United States in Japan with regard to birth control.

A smaller series of printed material follows and is primarily economic in nature. It has been divided into five sub-series reflecting the material's origin: writings by King; writings by other authors; Committee for Constitutional Government, Inc. publications, including runs of *Paul Revere Messages and Spotlights for the Nation*; *Features for America's Future*, Syndicated, which King co-authored with Ralph W. Gwinn; and press releases. All of the printed material has been filed in chronological order within each sub-series, except for that by other authors which has been arranged alphabetically according to the last name of the author of the work.

The Committee for Constitutional Government, Inc. series contains the group's financial records and papers relating to the Committee's organization. Among the financial materials are budget control reports, financial reports, operating statements and balance sheets, and reports on the publications

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distributed by the Committee all of which have been arranged chronologically within each type of record. Other documents include the constitution of the Committee; lists of trustees; notices, agendas, minutes of meetings, 1946-1953; and news clippings about the lawsuit, Dr. Edward A. Rumely vs. The Buchanan Committee.

Dr. King wrote a number of books during his career as an economist and statistician. Three of these works, *The Small Loan Situation in New Jersey in 1929* (1929), *Trends in Philanthropy* (1928), and "The Valuation of Urban Realty for Purposes of Taxation" (1914) are included in the collection in the last box.

Three photographs are included in this collection: a Christmas card (1950s), a picture of Sameul Pettingill (1910s-1920s), and a picture of A.F. Davis, farmer, and family and Governor Lausche of Ohio (1951).

Administrative Information

Detailed Description of the Collection

Description

[Guide to the Willford I. King papers](#)

Names and Subjects

Subject Terms :

Conservatism--Economic aspects
Debts, Public
Depressions--"1929"--United States
Economic councils
Economic development
Economic forecasting
Economic policy
Economic surveys
Economics
Economists--United States--Correspondence
Social policy
Welfare economics

Personal Names :

Bullis, Harry A. (Harry Amos), 1890-1963
Byrd, Harry F. (Harry Flood), 1887-1966
Cook, Robert C. (Robert Carter), 1898-1991
Dresser, Robert B. (Robert Bartlett), 1880-1976
Ely, Richard T. (Richard Theodore), 1854-1943
Fertig, Lawrence
Fisher, Irving, 1867-1947
Gannett, Frank E. (Frank Ernest), 1876-1957

Gerard, Sumner
Gipson, James H.
Gwinn, Ralph W. (Ralph Waldo), 1884-1962
Hancock, Glen E.
Harper, F. A. (Floyd Arthur), 1905-1973
Kimmel, Joseph Stephen
King, Willford Isbell, 1880-1962
Kohlberg, Alfred, 1887-1960
Lombard, Norman
Luten, Daniel B., 1869-1946
MacArthur, Douglas, 1880-1964
Pettengill, Samuel B. (Samuel Berrett), 1886-1974
Rumely, Edward A. (Edward Aloysius), 1882-1964
Runyon, W. Cleveland
Saunders, Bart

Corporate Names :

American Statistical Association
Committee for Constitutional Government
Committee for Economic Development
National Association of Manufacturers (U.S.)

Finding aid prepared by processing staff
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